

**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING AN IMPROVED
COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL FOR TELEPHONE
CONFERENCE INITIATION AND MANAGEMENT**

5

Abstract

Methods and systems for providing an improved communications channel for telephone conference initiation and management are provided. Messages for initiating and managing a telephone conference are exchanged between a client computer and a gateway computer utilizing XML formatted messages transmitted over an instant messaging compatible protocol. The gateway computer converts the messages to web services requests and communicates with telephone conference network hardware utilizing the web services-based request. Status indicators from the telephone conference equipment is converted from web services requests to XML by the gateway and transmitted back to the client computer via the instant messaging protocol.

10